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UNCLAS MUSCAT 001289

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DRL/IL (LHOLT), NEA/RA, NEA/ARPI
STATE PASS USTR FOR JBUNTIN, AROSENBERG
DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ELAB EIND ETRD PHUM SOCI MU

SUBJECT: CHILD LABOR UPDATE FOR OMAN

REF: A. SECSTATE 143552

1B. 04 MUSCAT 1449

1C. MUSCAT 1237

1D. MUSCAT 1045

1E. MUSCAT 1277

Per ref A, the following is updated information to supplement our 2004 and previous child labor reports. Updates are keyed to categories listed in ref A, para 7:

A) Laws/Regulations proscribing the worst forms of child labor:

-- While the Omani government does not consider minor camel jockeys as necessarily falling under the province of International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 182, in August 2005 the Ministry of Sport raised the minimum legal age of camel jockeys to 18. A waiver is available that sets the current minimum age at 14 years, rising annually by one year until achieving the 18-year minimum by the 2009 camel racing season (ref C).

-- On July 3, the Sultanate ratified ILO Conventions 105 and 138, Abolition of Forced Labor and the Minimum Age of Employment (ref D).

-- The inter-ministerial Committee on Health and Safety, established after Oman's 2002 ratification of ILO Convention 182, is still drafting a proposed list of the worst forms of child labor, as called for in Article 4 of the Convention.

B) Implementation and Enforcement:

-- The Ministry of Manpower is charged with enforcement of Omani labor laws.

-- Statistics for 2004 indicate a staff of 42 persons in the directorate charged with reviewing labor disputes. The directorate conducted 4148 labor inspections in 2004 and 257 re-inspections. The statistics do not specify whether children were among workers at any of the inspected establishments (15 is the minimum age for non-hazardous employment), but the total workforce of inspected establishments totaled 82,964.

C) Social programs to prevent worst forms of child labor:

-- As reported in 2004 (ref B), basic education is compulsory through grade 10.

-- The National Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Ministries of Social Development, Education and Manpower, and the local UNICEF office are all engaged in efforts to ensure basic education and a healthy environment for minors.

D) Comprehensive government policy:

-- Among the government's efforts to protect children is the 2004-2006 Country Program of Cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and UNICEF. Representatives from both parties conducted a mid-term review of the program in May 2005. The joint strategy focuses on improving well-being of children and families, promoting quality education, child protection, and development of life-skills and healthy lifestyles among adolescents.

E) Continual progress toward eliminating the worst forms of child labor:

-- UNICEF and the ILO have applauded the Sultanate's decision to raise the minimum age of camel jockeys (ref E).

BALTIMORE